

of the term can the House of Commons be regarded as the house of the people or its members as the representatives of the people. * The Commons form still only an estate of the realm, a privileged and limited order of the nation, in numbers a fraction of the mass,' the constituency even since its enlargement by the Reform Act comprising no more than three or four hundred thousand persons. The House of Lords, on the other hand, though not elective, is truly representative, ' the most eminent existing example of representation without election.'

The House of Lords represents the Church in the Lord Bishops, the law in the Lord Chancellor, and often the Lord Chief Justice, the counties in the Lord Lieutenants, the boroughs in their noble recorders. This estate, from the character of the property of its members, is also essentially the representative chamber of the land; and, as the hereditary leaders of the nation, especially of the cultivators of the land, the genuine and permanent population of England, its peasantry.¹

' In a hasty and factious effort to get rid of representation without election, it will be as well if eventually we do not discover that we have only obtained election without representation.' But if the Lords are representative, what of their responsibility ? They are in fact in no greater degree irresponsible than the Commons.

Is a privileged order of three hundred thousand individuals, represented by their deputies, likely to be more responsible than a privileged order of three hundred individuals appearing by themselves ? On the contrary, every one sees and feels in an instant that, as far as the nation is concerned, the more limited order, who appear for themselves, and are more in the eye of the world, are in fact in a moral point of view much more responsible to the general body of the people than the more numerous and more obscure class, who shuffle off that moral responsibility on their representatives.⁴